

City of Santa Barbara
COVID-19 Business Advisory Task Force
February 26, 2021 Meeting Summary

- A number of Business Advisory Task Force members were able to join and participate in the meeting with the Mayor and City staff.
- Mayor Murillo opened the meeting recognizing improving public health conditions and transition out of the state of home order and into the county tier system.
- Jason Harris with the City gave an update on the City's intent to extend the Emergency Economic Recovery Ordinance from March until September, and reported that the City's State Street Subcommittee completed their work and will present recommendations to Council on March 9. He also reported on the improved public health metrics, but noted that only one of the four metrics was being met currently.
- Kristen Miller of the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce gave a short presentation about the new Chamber initiative, the "Santa Barbara Economic Development Partnership" which now has a dedicated webpage at www.sbedp.org, that the Chamber initiated with funding from the City, Visit Santa Barbara, and the Better Together Fund. Keith Higbee, working with Amy Cooper, presented a PowerPoint outlining their efforts to identify businesses that may be positioned to expand or relocate their operations downtown. They are creating a database of companies and properties in order to facilitate business investment in the vacant storefronts. Mr. Higbee said the intention is to scale the program to encompass all of the City and the South Coast region. There were a variety of questions as to their work effort, analysis and types of companies seeking space. Overall, task force members expressed support and interest in the effort making a difference.
- Several task force members provided updates on topics such as: concern for the broader economic impact, and challenges to business community as business restrictions continue; the need for ABC to make the temporary changes to the rules of service permanent; concern for the lack of activity on the 800 and 900 blocks of State Street; and advocacy for city-wide marketing and promotion efforts for all commercial areas in the city.